



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

## PSYCHOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS

---

### AMERICA AND THE LIFE OF REASON<sup>1</sup>

FROM his dark and revolutionary beginnings the American has been a puzzle to himself and to his neighbors. It was not the new world of his habitation which caused the puzzlement, nor the old world of his heritage. The former was as the earth is everywhere; the steppes of Russia and the midcontinental plains of North America set men the same task and they performed it with their bare hands in about the same way. The latter he carried with him in his heart, and he uttered his heart in his life for a long time, quite as the European did, generosity for generosity and brutality for brutality, combining loving thoughts with hateful actions, noble professions with mean conduct, law with violence, religion with cruelty, morality with dishonesty after the manner of men everywhere. The Colonial of the United States was merely a European in an un-European setting. He built himself his foreign quarter as Europeans do in China today, and save that the land he built it in was empty of men instead of peopled, he behaved in the same way. The Puritans prayed and persecuted, the Cavaliers drank and dallied, the Scotch-Irish renewed their Ulster, with Indians instead of Southrons to battle against and hunt.

Europe gave no thought to the otherness of America until there had been added to the life there established and the purposes gained a new idea and a new hope, and this hope and idea had been ordained by choice and consent the mark of distinction, the differentia of the species, wherewith white men in America set themselves apart from their blood brothers in Europe. The hope and idea are constituted by what is usually called democracy.

When the Americans elected to give it allegiance and to order—or confuse—their lives by its dogmas and practises it was a new thing in Europe, the challenge of present thought to old institutions, nowhere tested in action or established in conduct. The American revolution was an adventure into the political unknown, as the Russian revolution is today, and its fortunes became a matter of momentous import both to the privileged who were secure in the old

<sup>1</sup> George Santayana: *Character and Opinion in the United States*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1920. Pp. viii + 233.

order and to the disinherited who hoped for security in a new. It could not be assaulted by its neighbors as were the French Revolution and the Russian; it was too far, and the distances of its domicile were too vast. It could only be watched, and praised or execrated. And because it was thus isolate and unique in an elsewhere crowded and jostling world, it became what later politics, peopled by the same original stocks and undertaking much the same adventure, what Canada and Australia and South Africa and New Zealand did not become, a symbol and a potent of a new turn in the organization of western society, whose fortunes must decide whether life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness are inalienable rights or lucky accidents, whether government should be a device which makes and keeps them secure for all men or takes them away from many men so that they may be assured to some; whether its powers rest on the consent of the governed or the will and cunning of the governors. Having hitched its wagon to the glittering, imaginative luminaries of the Declaration of Independence, the American republic, its institutions, its life and fortune, have undergone scrutiny of a type unparalleled by other states. It has become a puzzle, whose duplexity and contradictions one writer after another has tried to extend or to reconcile—De Tocqueville and Bryce, Dickens and Kipling and Wells, to speak of only the most notable of the aliens; Irving and Lowell and Whitman, Howells and Mark Twain, to speak only of the generations gone, in America.

To the list of the most distinguished, domestic and stranger, must now be added Mr. George Santayana, taking his place between them. I say "between" because Mr. Santayana does not feel himself to be an American. "I am not one," he writes, "except by long association." Yet it is apparent that this long association has much affected his own temperament and opinions, blinding him to some things and making him more sensitive to others, in such a way that, if during his forty years in the United States he did not become an American, he certainly ceased to be a European. Perhaps he never was a European of the contemporary mode. Both his method and his manner point to a quality of personality unassimilable to the categorical groupings of the present time, with its passion, its strain, its speed, its hard venturesomeness, its reticulated, yet abandoned realism. Those who remember him in the class-room will remember him as a spirit solemn, and sweet and withdrawn; whose Johannine face by a Renaissance painter held an abstracted eye and a hieratic smile, half mischief, half content; whose rich voice flowed evenly, in cadences smooth and balanced as a liturgy; whose periods had the intricate perfection of a poem and the import of a prophecy; who spoke somehow for his hearers

and not to them, stirring the depths of their natures and troubling their minds, as an oracle might, to whom pertained mystery and reverence, so compact of remoteness and fascination was he, so moving, and so unmoved. Between him and them there was a bar for which I know no similitude save that which is suggested sometimes by a Chinese painting of the tranquil Enlightened One, the irresistible magnet of his sedulous devotees, filling their vision and drawing them on as he sits, inscrutably smiling, above them. This detachment, which often seemed to me to have a tinge of sadness and insufficiency in it, is a quality of all of Mr. Santayana's works and endows them with something of the passionate impersonality of great music.

At the points where it is personal it is felt as a provocative superiority or a somewhat pitying, somewhat ironical comprehension, like that of a knowing spectator at the play. It suggests a kinship there, in which learning and experience both are mingled. You are led to think of the age of Voltaire, and of Voltaire himself, of Voltaire withdrawn from indignation and with a malice more Olympian. And you are led to think of the age of Emerson, and of Emerson himself, but of an Emerson turned luminous and balanced and articulate, with an understanding more precise and a sympathy more skeptical. In both these periods, the period of Voltaire and the period of Emerson, men of sensibility and insight found themselves in a society whose institutions were surviving without being alive, whose visions had hardened into formulae and whose powers had become privileges. In both, feeling was turning to rebellion and hope to protest. The men of sensibility and insight were those who could find place in neither camp of the dividing society. They stood aside from both authority and rebellion. They converted feeling into understanding and hope into philosophic irony. The perspectives they found turned authority to ridicule and rebellion to pity. This also is what Mr. Santayana, at his most humane, accomplishes, and far more perfectly than his predecessors. He carries over into the twentieth century as a pitying detachment of free intelligence from rebellion, the detachment which free intelligence in nineteenth century New England accomplished from authority. So he stands alone, without party, sect or school, a humanist against all narrower allegiances, and as lonely in his being as his vision is great. Neither James nor Royce, who were his colleagues as well as his teachers at Harvard, have this loneliness. The former was a rebel and founded a school; the latter was an authoritarian and perpetuated one. Emerson does have this loneliness; he moved beyond the range of established authority by being different, not by being opposed,

and it is in the line of Emerson that the spiritual genealogy of Santayana, the American, is to be sought. Of course, there are contributing branches; race, the discipline and forgotten impressions of childhood, the isolation and otherness of the youthful newcomer in a strange community, the richness and refinement of a learning and a culture without parallel among philosophers anywhere, and a pondering of the insight and the glories of Plato and Aristotle, the Greeks, and the austerities and insight of Spinoza the Jew. But the essential assurance of the goodness of life, the recognition of its youth, its spontaneity and its absoluteness, the readiness to excuse, to condone, and to adjust, to seek composition and harmony as against conflict and intransigency, these are of the same spirit as that which Mr. Santayana attributes to America, particularly the America which he knew and grew up in. It is the spirit of Emerson, unstained by the oversoul. Its philosophical garb and expression, which give it so subtle and fascinating a manner and accent, point, while they blur, the figure and sentiment they adorn—and conceal. For in his confrontation with life, Mr. Santayana has himself not escaped the contagion of the genteel tradition. The Jehovah of Calvin has been displaced by the matter of Aristotle and Spinoza and modern science, the predestination of Presbyterianism by the necessities of automatism. Mankind, for him, is what it is, and will be what it must. Its history has only an expressive, not an operative significance; its moral best is beauty rather than goodness; consummation, not achievement. "Every animal has its festive and ceremonious moments, when he poses or plumes himself or thinks; sometimes he even sings and flies aloft in a sort of ecstasy. Somewhat in the same way, when reflection in man becomes dominant, it may become passionate; it may become religion or philosophy—adventures often more thrilling than the humdrum experiences they are supposed to interrupt." For Mr. Santayana conceives life as the heirs of the genteel tradition among whom he lived and with whom he grew up lived it; vertically, not horizontally. "Reflection," he says, "is itself a turn, and the top turn, given to life." He means that we grow into thought as a lily grows into blossom. Its roots reach out into the mud, its stalk stretches upward through slime; but its petals are in the free air, all white and pure and well-ordered. In them the matter or force underneath has come to the limit of its power, has used itself up. They neither toil nor spin, they simply are the topmost turn given to life. So also is reflection in man the passionate but important excellence of a living body whose energies have somewhat exceeded its needs and blossomed in spirit—the topmost turn given to life—as the height

and shape and iridescence and music of a fountain is the topmost turn of the water-pressure whose ultimate expression these are. It is of the essence of reason to live on this topmost turn. It is to make of life a harmony and to find habitation in the ideal, and this is what the heirs of the genteel tradition and its victims had somehow come to when Mr. Santayana knew them and dwelt among them. That he should have escaped their contagion would have argued an insensitiveness altogether contrary to his nature: his very strictures upon them show how deeply they influenced him. What he says of Charles Eliot Norton, who was one of the New England apostles of the "topmost turn," may be said, I think, also of him: "Professor Norton's mind was deeply moralized, discriminating and sad; and these qualities rightly seemed American to the French observer of New England, but they rightly seemed un-American to the politician from Washington." It may be said, with, of course, a difference, but it is not, to my mind, a difference of kind or degree to make of Mr. Santayana a species of another genus or to insulate him from the tradition that pervaded the scene in which he grew up.

## II

The duplexity of American life of which Charles Eliot Norton is a concretion and a symbol has its mates in other fields. Of the divinities in the Pantheon which the myth-making public-school histories of the United States have provided for its public men, who could be more diverse and dissonant in temperament and aspiration than Washington, Lincoln and Roosevelt; and which of them is the "true" American? Lincoln, deeply moralized, discriminating and sad, whom also politicians acknowledge as the foremost personification of the type, yet whose life and labor entail everything that is the opposite of Norton's? Roosevelt, the nervous and didactic confutation of Lincoln's tolerance, sadness and quiet? Or Washington, with the broad solidity, the heavy thoroughness of an English squire, in all respects the reverse of Roosevelt's swiftness, shrillness, instability and omnivorous superficiality? Or, to take a living instance—Wilson, with the professions and ideology he took to the Peace Conference and the engagements he brought back from there? Or a symbolic one—the statue made by the sculptor Bartholdi as the gift of the free Republic of France to the sister-republic across the sea—Liberty, enlightening the world, with a jail imputed at its base?

The interpretation of this duplexity which Mr. Santayana offers is the traditional one. Character and opinion in America are, in his regard, the outcome of the impact of an old, rather

overcivilized people upon a new and undeveloped land. The force of the impact loosened, the attrition of the contact frayed, the ancestral hope, habit and custom of life and thought, generating others, more competent for the necessities of the setting, truer to the coercions and more answerable to the requirements of its nature. The generation of these others was a renovation of the youth of the people. Americans are a sort of collective Faust, whose memories of Gretchen and the cloister trouble but do not restrain the conquest of the new empire and, perhaps, the endeavor after Helen. America is a young country with old memories. The duplexity is due to the conflict between this—somewhat magical—joining of crude youthful passions and polite, ancient thoughts and shibboleths in one body-politic. The classes who utter the passions and those who utter the memories are not at one, and the future, of course, belongs to youth.

I am not sure that in restating Mr. Santayana's allusive and varied formulations of this view I have done him justice. His thought is too organic, too integrated with provisos and qualifications to be susceptible of simple, inevitable statement. The essential point seems to me, however, beyond doubt. It is this confrontation of new land and old people, and most of his discussion consists of the delineation and, in the light of the harmonies of the life of reason, which is his measure of all things human and divine, of the interpretation, of the changes in the people brought about by the contact with the land.

How profound these changes are, what they signify, how lasting they are likely to be, is not clear. Sometimes he suggests that they are altogether external, and that the inwardness of human existence is a thing inalterably young: "nothing lasts forever; but the elasticity of life is wonderful, and even if the world lose its memory, it could not lose its youth;" so that America is exemplifying anew an immemorial cycle of destruction and restoration that life forever undergoes. At other times there is a hint that the changes he speaks of are constitutive, and that the species *homo Americanus* is compact really of these and nothing else, so that persons of whatever stock suffer a sea-change and indifferently become American: "young America was originally composed of all the prodigals, truants, and adventurous spirits that the colonial families produced: it was fed continually by the younger generation, born in a spacious, half-empty world, tending to forget the old, straitened morality and to replace it by another, quite jovially human. This truly native America was reinforced by the miscellany of Europe arriving later, not in the hope of founding a godly commonwealth, but only of prospering in an untrammelled one. The horde of im-

migrants accepts the external arrangements and social spirit of American life, but it never hears of its original austere principles, or it relegates them to the same willing oblivion as it does the constraints which it has just escaped—Jewish, Irish, German, Italian, or whatever else they be.”

But, internal or external, these changes are not, we are asked to believe, so discontinuous as this passage implies. The English stock which first settled the country brought with it and preserved unchanged and caused to prosper, the spirit of “English liberty.” It is by virtue of this spirit and its supremacy in America that the miscellany of Europe could become the solidarity of the United States, Americans all, regardless of origin or trend. Its manifestation is free cooperation, based on free individuality. It requires plasticity and a willingness to consult, to compromise, to decide by majority vote. It can not prevail where minorities are unable loyally to acquiesce in the decision of the majority. And in practise its essence is this acquiescence. Where it does not prevail, the liberty desired or hoped for is “absolute or revolutionary liberty,” which is unyielding, intransigent, violent and selfish, capable of inspired vision and relentless martyrdom, but not of organized, harmonious living. Absolute liberty is a goal; English liberty is a method or technique which men may use in adapting themselves to one another and to the world at large. It is blind, illogical, piecemeal, for its principle is simply that of “live and let live.” The organization it effects presents like the British Empire the motley pattern of a crazy-quilt; the institutions it generates are clumsy, “jumbled and limping.” It always leaves a residue, unsocialized and unordered. Resting on respect for individuality, the contacts it involves are external and there remains room in it for growth. Its sign here in America is the triviality or technicality of legislative measures, the fact that government has so long “been carried on in the shade, by persons of no name or dignity.” For “free government works well in proportion as it is superfluous,” and the notorious superfluity of government in the United States is a sign “that cooperative liberty is working well and rendering overt government unnecessary.”

Is it, however, such a sign? The observation goes deep to signalize how American is Mr. Santayana’s opinion about America. For America is not yet, and never so far has been, the crowded country that England always was, where different stocks of ancient root have been pressed one against the other to live together as best they might—together, and yet free. America has been an empty land, where diverse liberties could cooperate because they had ample space and did not need to touch or crowd. Nor because,



for the most part, government in the United States was so long weak and far-removed, was its rigor absent. The rigor came, however, not through its officers, by due process of law, but through law's violators, at the hands of Judge Lynch. And that symbol of the spirit of cooperative liberty is still prominently with us, as it was in the beginning, and seems like to be in days to come, one hundred per cent. American. Nor does Judge Lynch live alone, nor is he without children in the house, from the Ku Klux to the industrial spy. It is a question whether the young America of prodigals and truants who fled the boredom or tyranny of the theocratic communities, carrying the seeds of what is America now, possessed the spirit of English or of absolute liberty. They fared abroad, perhaps, not only because the land and its promise lured them, but because they would not live at home. Such cooperation as they learned, consequently, they learned because the land exacted it, on the penalty of death. Where the land was kinder, or had been conquered, they were as dogmatic, as imperious, as intolerant as their fathers. Even if America were "all one prairie, swept by a universal tornado," it is not the prairie which compels uniformities, nor the tornado that fixes the grammar of assent in which is parsed the modern American mind. Prairie and tornado, when they cease to be mere material environment that must be tamed and humanized and become circumstances of life that may be understood and expressed, liberate and diversify. Main Street is not of their making but of man's.

For the secularization of Calvinism merely shifted the seat of authority from the revealed word of God in the Bible to the no less sacred word of the Fathers in the Constitution. The pattern of government which this provided reproduced itself like Royce's maps from nation to state, from state to city, with a uniform rigidity over which the communism and Catholicism that Mr. Santayana contrasts with English liberty have no advantage. The dogmas of the Constitution acquired a holiness no less sinister than Mr. Santayana calls Jehovah's—after, that is, the southern minority, which now composes "the solid south," had been coerced into a surrender of its own type of absolutism; and the Negroes, a dissimilar race compelled to live in an inferior and degraded state both North and South, were endowed with the privilege of a freedom which rendered this state secure for them.

There is a polarity rather than an interaction between the sanctity of the political dogma, with its correlates in the sameness and rigidity of the political pattern, and those compulsions of the mass and coercions of business which in America are observed to snuff out personality by the shaping of men according to the

“national orthodoxy of work and progress.” The former is as absolute as ever any churchly dogma was, and becomes more so with the thinning and attrition of churchly differences. The latter is relative, flexible, varying from area to area, and within the framework of industrial organization from industry to industry. It is in the latter, not the former, that cooperative liberty sometimes occurs, occurs because in the latter lies the impact and concentration of diverse liberties which are like to be equal in power and need, and must therefore adjust themselves to one another or die, both. There exists, it is true, within the latter, a caste that is consecrated to the infallibility of the political dogma and the political forms which utter it. The caste has always been their beneficiaries, whether through the public land grants of the beginning or the tariff of these latter days. They naturally seek to maintain this benefaction in a country which industry has converted from a nation of individuals into a nation of classes, by invoking, as in the war upon the labor union, the dogma of absolute individual liberty where it can no longer exist, where it must become cooperative liberty if it is to be liberty at all. Notwithstanding, industry compels cooperation and it is doubtful whether this class can have its way. Its way is not the way of English liberty and never was, yet it has given the pitch to the religion of God while that mattered, and set the key to the religion of the State which began to matter from the moment when the English Colonials agreed to conceive themselves as a sovereign state dedicated to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

### III

The corporate personality which was defined by the philosophy of natural rights of the Declaration of Independence and was embodied in the form of federal government established by the Constitution, is essentially an artificial thing. It rests on no foundation of immemorial custom or consanguineous tradition. It is a thing made, not grown, and it is that by virtue of whose existence the American most specifically distinguishes himself from other human associations, regardless of what other qualities compose and designate him, or how profoundly. Englishmen or Frenchmen think of themselves in their natures rather than their political institutions; Americans think of themselves in their political institutions. The consequences are inestimable. For it is a trick of the mind that its inventions, which serve like names in this differentiating fashion, shall become centers for the accretion of values which turn them from engines of service into objects of adoration. They get trans-

formed, instruments hypostatized, idols of the forum, market-place and cave. The moving life of the nation may glide from under them, carrying their worshipers into new and unexpected relations and responsibilities. But the idols will then grow more precious as they are felt to recede, and the urge to make their adoration universal will become more imperative with their remoteness. The "Americanism" with which self-conscious, polite America is challenging the worship of the world is an idol of this nature and status. It is not the expression of present needs and future satisfactions. It is the concretion of satisfactions and privileges remembered, when the land was wilder than it is, and its people needier, cheerier and more gainful.

This, I think, is the Americanism Mr. Santayana best knew and now interprets. If the liberty which he attributes to it is in his regard an inheritance, the most precious America possesses from the English ancestor, the intense idealism about matter of the descendant is an endowment or an imposition from the American soil. Mr. Santayana's characterization of this soil is rather simple, rather scanty. He sees it as all one prairie, monotonous, uniform, empty, the chief natural features continentally spaced, so that the land does not invite one to take root, but to wander. The differences between North and South and East and West, between what is intrinsic in New England and what is intrinsic in Kansas, or Virginia, or California, or Wisconsin, are ignored; the diversification of identical stocks by river and hill, by table-land and plain, are ignored or regarded as trivial and indifferent beside the vast monotony and overruling emptiness of the midland spaces. These are the determinants of the American character. They "bring a sort of freedom to both soul and body." They induce in the soul a moral emptiness to mate the material one, for space is freedom to move, and where life has failed to take root, "where men and houses are easily moved about, and no one, almost, lives where he was born or believes what he has been taught," no tradition can continue, no customs sustain a community, no past compel with authority. These things slip away from men even as they move. They face bare nature, unassisted but also untrammelled by the past. She becomes a challenge and a task, the material for any experiment, evoking and strengthening initiative, originality, efficiency, directness and imagination. The conquest, exploitation and use of nature becomes the chief, the only deep, preoccupation of the American. He faces her present starkness in the hope of her future bounty. He becomes "an idealist working on matter," a moral materialist, hence, by force of circumstances, practical, worldly, helpful, efficient; full of vitality; obsessed by the optimistic assump-

tion that "the more existence the better;" measuring life and the values of life, like a fisherman his haul, in terms of quantity and indifferent as to quality. It is these traits that the soil has evoked and fixed in him and in these it has made him young, for it has required him to be "chiefly occupied with his immediate environment in terms of reactions . . . inwardly prompted, spontaneous and full of vivacity and self-trust." Experience has not yet brought on the sobriety of recollected failure and the chastening of emotions from which maturity and age eventuate; and in whose harmony and self-restraint is the joy of a true moral idealism. Only these can determine whether the American will remain forever an "ideal-ist working on matter" or shall become a lover of the life of reason.

The argument is plausible, and seductive. I can not, however, state it without disturbing monitions from all the unmentioned attributes of the American scene and the unregarded diversities of the American peoples. Even the imperturbable, stoic Indians had not this unity of culture and type which Mr. Santayana assigns to transplanted Europeans and their descendants, and the period of the Indian's sojourn upon the American continent was to the Indian's advantage. Why should its emptiness and monotony not have evoked from them the same qualities it elicited from the Europeans? Why should North and South have become so different in speech, in memories, and if you please, in hope, even before the Civil War? May it not be that the America which Mr. Santayana has in mind is a very narrow America, an America of only a single one of its many types? He had seen America so far as I know, from only three centers, along a narrow latitude—from Boston, from Chicago, from San Francisco. The men and women with whom he could have had anything more than very superficial contact at these centers are prevaillingly of the same stock, the same class, the same interest and hope. They are the builders of the west, whose money or parentage was of the east, the pioneers of the frontier, the heirs and the bearers of the genteel tradition across the continent. It is a tradition that has relaxed along the westward way, so that in a progress from Boston to San Francisco one moves from the place of agonized conscience to a place where civilization is on a holiday. But I doubt whether this relaxation is the effect of the land alone and not far more the effect of its mastery. There are Flagellantes and devout Calvinists in California also. The bitterness of a cult and the poverty of a culture are alike dispelled by prosperity and abundance. Whether in Europe or America, pioneering, hardship and insecurity of life in the wilderness are ever accompanied by intense faith and proportionate intolerance. Leisure, ease, and freedom of a wilderness subdued and a community safeguarded are

accompanied by a relaxation of faith and a secular tolerance. What has Americanized Catholicism in the United States may as well be the prosperity of the average Catholics as the irrelevance of its doctrine to the necessities of the frontier. Catholicism was strongest when Europe was most barbarous. Intolerance is still an attribute of the country and tolerance of the city.

Boston also has enjoyed, or suffered, the relaxation of the genteel tradition. But that the relaxation was due to an irrelevance and a forgetting, under the impact and compulsion of a wild nature needing to be tamed, has not the indubitability with which Mr. Santayana states it. It may be that the relaxation was the effect of a compenetration and enrichment of the traditional Calvinism with the economic abundances and secular refinement of a life thereby set free from drudgery and fear, and rising hence into that enjoyment of happy and ordered living of which this is the prerequisite and condition. For I do not observe anywhere in America the passing of Puritanism by displacement and forgetting. On the contrary, Mr. Mencken and Mr. Sherman remind us that it is everywhere compellingly present, challenged, invoked, rebelled against, compromised with, lived, renounced, undergoing such a transformation as before the Reformation Catholicism was undergoing at the hands of the humanists, and for much the same reason. Its case is not that of a memory fading before the iridescence of a welling life, and not from it springs the duplexity and essential contradiction of the American scene, "the curious alternation and irrelevance as between week-days and Sabbaths, between American ways and American opinions." These are born of the strain between its mobile expanding economy and its rigid political pattern, compelling it to develop new organs and instrumentalities of government instead of adapting old ones. But I do not discern in the cultural background of the United States anything discontinuous with its cultural present, like a new species springing from a new soil. There is a change in the accent, but no diminution of the content, of the past. An increase, rather. The fashion, hence, which Mr. Santayana follows of treating the intellectual efflorescence of New England, about the middle of the nineteenth century, as a conclusion rather than a beginning, seems to me very dubious. "New England," he writes, "had an Indian Summer of the mind; and an agreeable reflective literature showed how brilliant that russet and yellow season could be. There were poets, historians, orators, preachers, most of whom had studied foreign literatures and had travelled; they demurely kept up with the times; they were universal humanists. But it was all a harvest of leaves; these worthies had an expurgated and barren conception of life; theirs

was the purity of sweet old age. Sometimes they made attempts to rejuvenate their minds by broaching native subjects; they wished to prove how much matter for poetry the new world supplied, and they wrote 'Rip Van Winkle,' 'Hiawatha', or 'Evangeline'; but the inspiration did not seem much more American than that of Swift or Ossian or Chateaubriand. These cultivated writers lacked native roots and fresh sap because the American intellect itself lacked them. Their culture was half a pious survival, half an intentional acquirement; it was not the inevitable flowering of a fresh experience. Later there have been admirable analytic novelists who have depicted American life as it is, but rather bitterly, rather sadly; as if the joy and the illusion of it did not inspire them, but only an abstract interest in their own art. If anyone, like Walt Whitman, penetrated to the feelings and images which the American scene was able to breed out of itself, and filled them with a frank and broad afflatus of his own, there is no doubt that he misrepresented the conscious minds of cultivated Americans; in them the head as yet did not belong to the trunk."

Replace in this passage New England by Italy or Poland, or Bohemia, or Greece, or Ireland, or Jewry, and you have, item for item, the literary anatomy of resurgent and awakened nationalism everywhere in Europe—the translation and romantic imitation of foreign thought and foreign manners; the superiority to the formal tradition at home; the conscious, learned closet literature on native themes; the turn toward a didactic realism regarding the native scene; the emergence of masters of the people's idiom like Whitman, and their repudiation by the cultivated; the multiplication of such masters, the babel of themes and interests, until the national life gets steadily set in direction and intent and literature takes on expressive pertinency.

This is the very springtide adventure of the national mind, freed and made self-conscious by prosperity—or sorrow—and seeking first to show that it is as good, as competent and as refined as its longer established neighbors, and secondly, to search out, among the many forms established in excellence and authority which the world offers, the form of communication and self-utterance most congenial to its own nature. It has ever begun by adventuring abroad for its silken garmenting, spurning its homespun, whether in Chaucer's day or in Longfellow's. And it seems ever to have ended by improving the native weave through admixture and combination of the foreign. So it was in New England. The national consciousness long absorbed by the rejuvenating immediacies of nature, had finally, by mastering them, established itself in a degree of unwonted security and leisure. Looking about, it beheld new

and unsuspected perspectives, and to the fascination of the foreign, the old and elaborated and tried, it succumbed. Like every *nouveau riche* it was bound to adorn itself with the traditional trappings of cultural excellency and to surround itself with the goods traditionally established in approval. At the same time it would not abate a jot or tittle of its own claim to dignity and power. It surveyed its world and found it good and approved itself as the good world's maker, like little Jack Horner in the nursery corner proclaiming his moral superiority with every plum he extracted from the Christmas pie. Such was the spirit of New England about the middle of the nineteenth century, such is the spirit of whole of America today. On the western corner of the Boston Public Garden, facing the church of which he was long the pastor, there is a statue of William Ellery Channing, set up not many years ago. The inscription, taken from his sermons is superlative, and it fits Gopher Prairie, Minnesota, or Madison, Wisconsin, as closely as it fits Boston. "I see," it announces "the marks of God in the heaven and in the earth, but how much more in a liberal intellect, in magnanimity, in unconquerable rectitude, in a philanthropy which forgives every wrong and which never despairs of the cause of Christ and human virtue. I do and must reverence human nature. I bless it for its kind affections. I honor it for its achievements in science and in art and still more for its examples of heroic and saintly virtue. These are marks of divine origin and the pledges of a celestial inheritance. I thank God that my own lot is bound up with that of the human race."

Mr. Santayana has firmly understood and perfectly expressed the public sentiment which this inscription utters. He has observed that it is "the traditional orthodoxy, the belief, namely that the universe exists and is governed for the sake of man or of the human spirit." The liberalism that came with leisure and knowledge and prosperity has, he considers, left the orthodoxy untouched. He would not conceive that stated, as Channing stated it, so innocently, naïvely, ridiculously arrogant, it breathes itself the very breath of liberalism. For illiberalism does not reside in illusion regarding the importance of mankind, but in illusion regarding the importance of a particular class of men; liberalism does not consist in the surrender of the pathetic fallacy, but of its narrow or intolerant implications. Calvinism, like other forms of salvational religion, like Judaism, is through its doctrine of special selection at the core illiberal. It separates mankind forever into the damned and the saved, and it rewards the self-abasement which is the prerequisite to salvation with a predestined eternal supremacy. Its progression from Edwards to Channing, or for that matter, to Royce, has not been a

process of displacement or attrition so much as a process of expansion and assimilation. This inscription from the back of Channing's niche is Calvinism without the self-abasement and without the exclusiveness. It is the doctrine of predestination and election, extended to the whole of mankind, with some reservations, inevitable in the nature of the case, and altogether unconscious, in favor of New England as a vantage point: "I thank God that my own lot is bound up with that of the human race!"

This sentiment is not unnatural to a people who, mastering Nature swiftly and effectively, were looking upon their work and finding it good. Past achievement, present effort and future hope all argued election and predestination. Isolation, and detachment from the problems and perplexities of Europe made Europe a scene and America a spectator who might and did thank God that he was not as other men. But Europe mattered to America also significantly; significantly as a collection of cultural results, not a political and economic process. In comparison with the latter, the associations of men engaged in continental economic enterprise and bound together and distinguished as a nation by one peculiar idea and organization known as the United States of America felt themselves to be the wards of a superior and manifest destiny. Persons of so fortunate and victorious a history could not fail to be impervious to the starkness of materialism, or most expressive in the pathetic fallacies of idealism, which Mr. Santayana aptly calls the "higher superstition." But the peoples of Europe, although they had been long disciplined by suffering and sobered by disillusion, were in no better case. If the nineteenth century was not the time and America not a place where "pure truth" could be sought, neither do any other time and place seem to have been. At least the nineteenth century attained fully, without the promptings of need and the urge of faith, in America as well as in Europe, such a knowledge of nature and man as is without precedent and without parallel in the laborious and dreamful history of the human mind. That this knowledge was put to social uses, and set in a hopeful vision of all things whose source and center was the heart of man rather than the heart of things, can hardly be made a reproach by a thinker who realizes so profoundly as does Mr. Santayana that "even under the most favorable circumstances no mortal can be asked to seize the truth in its wholeness or at its center." Should it not suffice that, after millennia of subjectivity and anthropocentric bias, men were able anywhere to approach Nature and their own foregone conclusions with a question? Could they have done it, any more than the Greeks could, without the freedom which prosperity established, and the animal assurance that a world interrogated would not reply with an insult or a blow?



## IV

The academic environment, where alone this question was conspicuously raised, was the meeting place, and remains the meeting place the world over, of the old and the new. Mr. Santayana's account of its limitations, its prepossessions and perversities is undoubtedly correct, but I can not believe that they are important or especially American. For better or for worse, philosophers are professors, and if "the tendency to gather and to breed them in universities does not belong to ages of free and humane reflection," if "it is scholastic and proper to the middle ages and to Germany," it must be remembered that this tendency crystallized into an institution in the age of free and humane reflection which Mr. Santayana most admires and that the regimentation of thinkers into schools is the work of the very Plato and Aristotle whose "charming myths and civilized ethics" he would have the philosopher who must teach for a living expound to his pupils. It is not the gathering of philosophers in schools that betrays philosophy: it is the regimentation of opinion when they are gathered, the prostitution of free thought to religious dogma and political expediency, the subjection of the spirit of free enquiry to the vested interests of the mind. These convert the thinker into the lay priest, the lover of truth into the lackey of prejudice. And even that danger it is better for the philosopher to live with, than to live alone. If his thinking is only a soliloquy and never a communication, he may be a god, but never a man, and the chances are all against the likelihood that, wandering "alone like the rhinoceros," he can escape becoming one.

In Harvard College the secularization of Calvinism came to pass earlier, more easily and more gracefully than in New England as a whole, and far more radically and honestly than the secularization of the evangelical Christianisms that dominated the various colleges of the protestant countries of Europe. The same compulsions of a wilderness needing to be mastered or submitted to which converted Calvinism from a doctrine of election through self-abasement to a doctrine of election through self-assertion converted the traditional architects of educational discipline in the colleges into a sort of educational town meeting, where every subject had one vote and no privileges and the student might elect it according to his inertia, need or taste. It is this, and not, as Mr. Santayana thinks, the exigencies of the teacher's task that generated that peculiarity of mind and temper which pervaded the Harvard of his riper years and which he so well describes. The teacher's task is the same everywhere, in Oxford or Berlin or Paris as in Cambridge.

But its background in Cambridge was a new kind of academic life in the making, which demanded courage, experiment and faith in the prosperous outcome of an adventure without precedent, a game with rules as yet unenacted. Against these concrete uncertainties of daily life, the cosmic certainties of the comfortable ideals of the compensatory tradition were security and insurance. They gave the animal darkness of living enterprise such light of thought as it could endure, and the one was as natural to the picture as to the other. The world which an American student was preparing for was a world in which everything was in process, a world without traditions, standards, conventions or hereditary classes. It was a world all frontier. Everywhere in the cities of the east as well as the plains of the west, there were the confrontation, impact and consequent crumbling of all the racial groupings, all the national and religious associations of Europe. Men and women, fixed in the habit of thought and action by the smooth customs and intimate conventions of ancient place and long forgotten time of the homeland, found themselves one day, thinking and acting all irrelevantly, as in a vacuum, their own society dissolved and lost, and no community present or formed in which they felt at home. America thus became in the heart of its population a congeries of individuals, living each on his own, somewhat distrustful, tense, alert, but hopeful. Against this process of comminution, and imposed upon it somehow from above, rather than growing out of it, there were the uniform pattern of the political institution and the rigidity of the political dogma, there was the free public school, which had replaced the church as the transmitter of tradition and the custodian and teacher of true doctrine, and there was the ultimate and inescapable coercion of the automatic machine and the new industrial and financial economy which, with the machine's coming, began to displace the old. The academic world was the barometer of this situation. In a society so atomized as the American, communities and companies formed and faded like smoke clouds in the sky; nothing was fixed, nothing inevitable; only the common, the formal can be cleaved to, as a foothold against the universal atomizing flux. One element of this common doctrine has been, for all the peoples, the "higher superstition" and its vogue in the universities is a true reflection of the needs and will of American life. The other element, and a far more important one, has been the democratic dogma, with its institutional rigidity, its agrarian and legalistic individualism and the remaining items of its implication rendered false or irrelevant by the shifting of the economic base and technique of the national life. Outside of these certainties there was no telling what bit of curious knowledge or apparently irrelevant lore might not become

the saving item in the life and death struggle of the valiant young soul set out to win the world. The university, hence, must supply everything, from the proprieties of philosophy and politics, to the eccentricities of philology or the superfluities of the fine arts. It must prepare its young men not to fill a station which awaits them, ready-made, but to make themselves a station which they could fill. This is what Harvard only aspired to when Santayana was a student there. This, I think, is what Harvard thought it was accomplishing when he had become a teacher there.

It was inevitable that an academy so inspired should be wide rather than deep, and that formal education should be activist, technical and unordered, a challenge and evocation of powers rather than "the transmission of a particular moral and intellectual tradition." The tradition was too reassuring and too pervasive to require intentional transmitting; its pertinent living realities, moreover, were the orthodoxies of the historical and political "sciences," and in them it was transmitted and transmitted intact. The philosophers, hence, were in a position much freer and more daring than either the historians or the political economists. If "their sense of social responsibility was acute, because they were consciously teaching and guiding the community," and if "it made no less acute their moral loneliness, isolation, and forced self-reliance" it was precisely not because "they were like clergymen without a church, and not only had no common philosophic doctrine to transmit but were expected not to have one," but because in the character which American society then owned and does still to some degree own, the philosopher was as foot-loose as everyone else, and had like every one else to justify his being by the competency of his doing; he had to "make good." Nor at the time does he seem to have desired anything different. That he could, like Santayana or James or Royce, be at one and the same time a genuine philosopher and a popular professor is the sign that the incompatibility of these two rôles of which Mr. Santayana complains, is more adventitious than necessary: the progenitor of the species was after all the Socrates of Mr. Santayana's admiration. The result was that excellence of the Harvard school of philosophy which in spite of his modest deprecations Mr. Santayana signalizes. It was "a vital unit and cooperative in its freedom. There was a general momentum in it, half institutional, half moral, a single troubled, noble, exciting life. Everyone was laboring with the contradiction he felt in things, and perhaps in himself; all were determined to find some honest way out of it, or at least to bear it bravely. It was a fresh morning in the life of reason, cloudy but brightening."

It is good to recall how, of this vital unit, cooperative in its freedom, of personalities so unique and insights so noble and so contrary, Santayana was one, and the peer of any.

(*To be continued*)

H. M. KALLEN.

THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH.

### ON THE LOCUS OF TELEOLOGY: A REJOINDER

PROFESSOR L. J. HENDERSON'S reply<sup>1</sup> to my criticism<sup>2</sup> of his argument for teleology leaves open, it seems to me, several points which are worthy of further consideration. He deems my remarks on the locus of concepts not altogether germane to his teleological argument; they are, rather, a "criticism of the structure of knowledge," and anything of relevance that I advanced "can be met without passing beyond the field of science." On this ground he neglects to consider several of my arguments, and these I will leave, as he has left them, to the judgment of the reader. Nevertheless they concern not so much "the structure of knowledge," as the correct *versus* an incorrect use of certain concepts *within* "the field of science," and of some others in the field of philosophy.

The first point which Professor Henderson makes (p. 431) is that, contrary to my contention, he uses the term "unique" in a perfectly definite sense. "The heat of formation of water is the highest heat of formation of any compound from the elements, the solubility of carbon dioxide is such that it distributes itself equally between a liquid water phase and a gas phase," and so on for the other properties of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen and of their compounds. "In general the properties of these three elements and of their compounds very often fall at singular points (maxima, minima, points of inflection, *etc.*)" and "it is a significant and useful approximation to a description of all the elements to say that the properties of these three are unique." And "the word unique here in question is fully defined by illustrations of every sense in which it is employed, and . . . it is never in my writings used to imply anything but its clearly stated content." It thus appears that the generic predicate "unique" does not refer to some property possessed by each member of the genus, but to a different property in each member. I still submit, as in my earlier paper, that the word "unique" here means nothing; and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. this JOURNAL, 1920, Vol. XVII, pp. 430-436.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 365-381.